DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 170 024 PS 010 491

AUTHOR	Gordon, Ira J.; And Others
TITLE	Aspects of Parent Involvement in the Parent Education Follow Through Program.
INSTITUTION	North Carolina Univ., Chapel Hill. School of Education.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Apr 79
GRANT	G007701691
NOTE	18p.; For related documents, see PS 010 487 and PS 010 489-491; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (San Francisco, California, April 8-12, 1979)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Elementary Education; *Models; Parent Child Relationship; *Parent Education; *Parent Participation; Parent Role; *Parent School Relationship; Program Descriptions; Program Evaluation; School Community Cooperation; *School Community Relationship
IDENTIFIERS	*Community Impact Model; *Parent Education Follow Through Program

ABSTRACT

This paper reports on the assessment of parent involvement in the Parent Education Follow Through Program (PEFT) which focuses on the development of a home/school/community partnership and stresses the importance of the home learning situation. A pluralistic evaluative approach was used to assess the program. Case study data were collected in several PEFT communities as indicators of the program's impact on social systems impinging on the parent-child relationship, including employment, political activity, cross-cultural communication and general family services. Descriptive data focusing on home visitation by paraprofessionals, parental decision making and attendance at meetings and activities, and parental classroom volunteering were collected and analyzed. Inferential data highlighting the role of parents as teachers of their own children were sought, including assessments of the relationship between program related teaching behaviors and child achievement, and of the effects of the program on members of the family other than the target child. It was concluded that the findings demonstrate the effectiveness of a community impact model which emphasizes fostering multiple parental roles. (Author/BH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED170024

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

AERA, 1979

Session No. 16.07

Aspects of Parent Involvement in the Parent Education Follow Through Program

Ira J. Gordon, Ed.D., Patricia P. Olmsted, Ph.D.,
Roberta I. Rubin, Ph.D., Joan H. True, Ph.D.
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Patricia P. Olmsted,
Roberta I. Rubin, Joan H. True

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

PS010491

Paper prepared for the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, California, April 8-12, 1979.

This study was supported by a grant from the United States Office of Education (Grant No. G00-77-01691) to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Aspects of Parent Involvement in the Parent Education Follow Through Program

Ira J. Gordon, Patricia P. Olmsted, Roberta I. Rubin, Joan H. True
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Recognizing that the home and school environments both have a direct impact upon patterns and motives for child achievement, the Parent Education Follow Through program focuses on the development of a home-school partnership within the context of other systems impinging on the parent-child relationship. The development of this home-school partnership requires not only changes in each of the separate institutions but also changes in their interaction as well as changes in external social, economic, and political systems. This interaction of environments can be viewed as a transactional approach across systems or as a Community Impact Model. This model recognizes that parents do not operate in isolation, that what goes on within the family is influenced by a variety of forces outside the family, and that the family in turn plays a role in influencing a variety of social forces.

The central thrust of the program is toward the home learning situation and the relationship among home, school, and community rather than on the classroom instructional process. A primary assumption of the program is that the family is the central, most important and most long-lasting learning institution a child experiences. Parents are viewed as primary influences on their children's intellectual development. Although institutional change in classrooms and schools is viewed as essential to the success of the program, the sponsor does not prescribe a curriculum or classroom organization. The staff members do, however, recommend teaching styles applicable to home and school. The program staff believes that change occurs as the school adapts to the presence of community people in the classroom and to parents in policy-making and decision-making positions. Ultimate aims of the program are for parents and teachers to become working partners within a responsible community

environment.

The key features of local program implementation include:

* Parent educators who work in the classroom and visit parents in their homes
* Teams of parents and staff at each project site creating sets of home learning activities
* Policy Advisory Committees (PAC) organized into specialized subcommittees and involved in the day-to-day operation of the program
* The use of specific Desirable Teaching Behaviors (DTBs) both in the home and classroom

The features mentioned above are incorporated into the program and foster a number of parental roles including the parent as a: teacher of own child; paraprofessional; decision maker; learner; audience; and classroom volunteer. The parents' involvement in these roles facilitates their influence upon the program and also results in the enhancement of their own and their children's development. This includes nurturing the parents' ability to work at home with his or her child (teacher of own child) and encouraging parental involvement as a home visitor (paraprofessional). It also includes parent education for participation in the governance operations of the Policy Advisory Committee (decision maker) and for self-enhancement (learner and audience). An additional role is that of classroom volunteer engaging in instructional as well as other activities (see Figure 1). Our rationale is that as parents become involved in a variety of ways, their own sense of potency is enlarged, which then should impact upon the child's sense of purpose and thus upon the child's achievement.

To assess the effectiveness of this diverse parental involvement, multiple evaluation techniques have been used in the Parent Education Follow

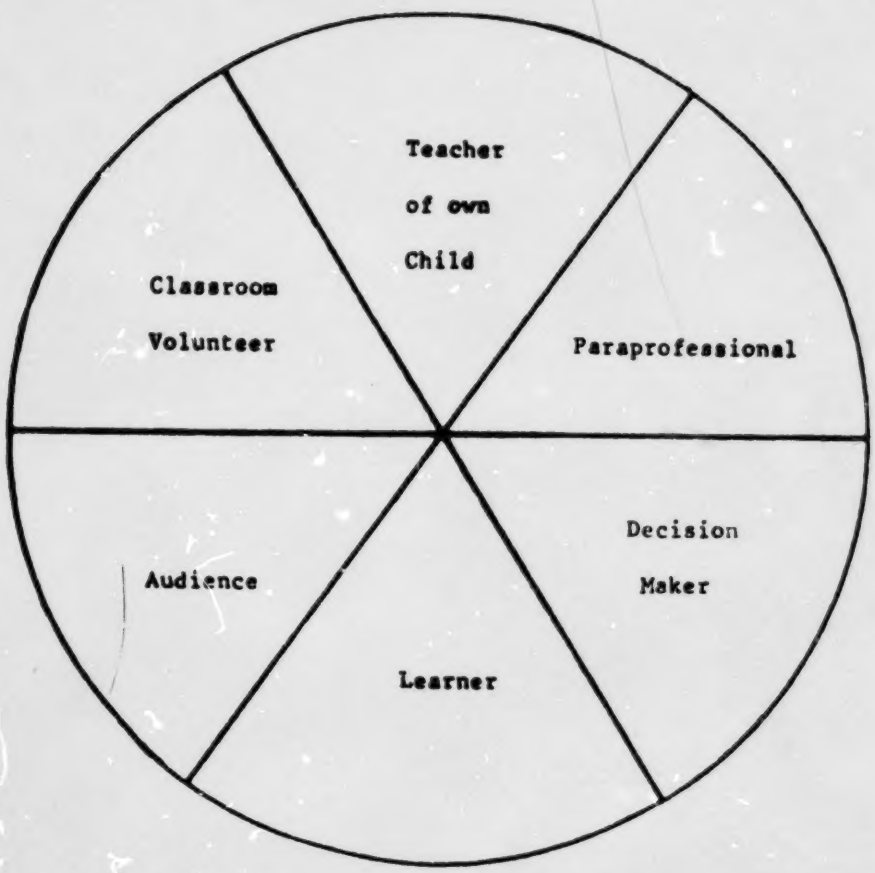

Figure 1. Parental roles in parent involvement.

Taken from: Gordon, I. J., Olmsted, P. P., Rubin, R. I., & True, J. J. How has Follow Through promoted parent involvement? National Association for the Education of Young Children, Young Children, 1979, in press.

Through program, including both qualitative and quantitative procedures. The need for this pluralistic evaluative approach has been advocated by other researchers (Boruch & Rindskopf, 1977; Cook & Reichardt, 1976; Glass, 1976; Porter & Chibucos, 1975; Rindskopf, 1978). Therefore, three types of data are presented in this paper to represent the evidence of success for this comprehensive program.

These three types of data were collected in the Parent Education Follow Through communities and were analyzed to illustrate the impact the program has had on parental involvement and education. These data include: (1) case study data focusing on the program's impact upon career development, political activity, communication, and comprehensive services; (2) descriptive data including records of parent participation, volunteering, and home visitation; and (3) inferential data focusing on parental teaching behaviors and child achievement and on vertical diffusion.

Case Study Data

The first set of data focuses upon the program's impact on social systems impinging on the parent-child relationship. During the 1977-78 school year, the sponsor conducted a qualitative evaluation in several Parent Education Follow Through communities. Drawing selectively from the ethnographic approach of social anthropology, fieldworkers prepared case studies for various sites, with special emphasis given to the social, political, economic, and personal effects of the model, taking into account various parental roles. Guided by the multi-instrument approach of anthropological fieldwork, the team used a variety of data-gathering techniques, including focused interviews, non-directive interviews, observations, and a comprehensive review of pertinent records. The data collected reveal the broad impact of the model. Notable effects involve career development,

political realignment, cross-cultural communication, and delivery of comprehensive services.

By hiring parents as paraprofessionals, the model has had a major impact on low income families. Providing jobs, training, and opportunities for advancement, the model has helped many adults become self-sufficient, improve their socioeconomic status, and grow in self-confidence. In a mid-western community, for example, the model has promoted the career growth of numerous adults: since the beginning of the program, three parent educators have become certified teachers now employed as fulltime instructors; another is a community health teacher working with handicapped children in a five-county area, while a fifth former parent educator is a social worker; six others have received permanent employment with the school corporation at advanced levels; while five others have found positions in private industry. Similarly, in a southern site, fifty-one of sixty-one parent educators have raised their educational level; at entry, as a paraprofessional, only six had more than high school training (including GED); now forty-two have post-secondary education. These data pertain to the roles of parent as paraprofessional and adult learner.

Broad-based involvement in various parental roles has had extensive systems effects, including political realignment and improvement in cross-cultural communication. The enhancement of parents as decision makers and adult learners figured prominently in these two areas. In one rural southern community, for example, the program has promoted interracial dialogue and has helped Blacks find inroads into policy-making bodies where they had been systematically excluded a decade ago. In a northern site with a large Native American population, the program has been successful in improving ethnic relations by developing positive, functional ties with the Tribal Council and by working closely with parents to integrate the Native American culture into the

curriculum. These efforts have fostered understanding and appreciation of the cultural heritage of the Native Americans and have promoted cross-cultural sensitivity.

In this community and others, the increased communication and the interagency networking coordinated by the program personnel have had a significant impact on general family services. Collaborative efforts to provide comprehensive medical, dental, social and psychological services have been effective. In one southern community, for example, parents, educators, and various agency personnel have built cooperative teams to provide needed services; their success, particularly in the improvement of medical and dental care, was emphasized by interviewees and was highlighted in a longitudinal study conducted locally among parents served by the program.

Through such coordinated action, the Parent Education Follow Through program has offered meaningful opportunities for parental participation. By assuming diverse roles, parents have become vocal advocates of family services and active participants in social, political, and educational processes affecting their own development and that of their children.

Descriptive Data

To supplement the case study data, descriptive statistics of parental involvement in our program have been collected and analyzed. These focus upon: 1) home visitation made by paraprofessionals; 2) parental decision making and attendance at meetings and activities; and 3) parental classroom volunteering.

Data pertaining to the home visitation component of our program illustrate the key roles of parents as teachers of one's own child and the role of paraprofessionals. In our program, paraprofessionals visit the homes of our children as well as work with these children and their teachers in their

respective classrooms. These home visits distinguish our program from other Follow Through programs which place greater emphasis upon the classroom than on the nome. By both visiting a child's home and working in the classroom, the paraprofessional helps to develop the partnership between the home and the school. Moreover, it is during this visit that the paraprofessional helps the parent become a more effective teacher of his or her own child.

The number of planned home visits varies from family to family, but typically, one home visit is made each week to each family. After each visit, the paraprofessional completes a home visit observation report designated as the Parent Educator Weekly Report. Success for this component of our program is evidenced by more than 80% of the children receiving at least 80% of their planned visits.

In Table 1 are presented the data concerning the percentage of families receiving at least 80% of the scheduled home visits. In one of the communities, 100% of all Follow Through families received at least 80% of their scheduled home visits during the 1977-78 school year. To place this in perspective, over 6,143 families were in the program in 1977-78 and approximately 150,000 home visits were made.

As a program stressing parent involvement, we are particularly interested in determining both the number of decisions made by parents at PAC meetings and the number of parents who attend these policy making meetings and activities. These data stress the parental roles of decision maker, adult learner, and audience. They were collected by participating communities utilizing minutes and sign-in sheets at both PAC meetings and PAC activities. Evidence of success for these components of our programs was shown by: 1) the frequencies of parental decisions being made which were relevant to the program; 2) at least 35% of the parents attending a PAC meeting; and

Table 1

Parental Involvement Data:

Percentages of Families Receiving Completed Home Visits [a,b]

1974 - 1978

Year	Lowest Community	Median Community	Highest Community
1973 - 1974	8	23	49
1974 - 1975	22	58	81
1975 - 1976	11	66	83
1976 - 1977	55	90	98
1977 - 1978	76	91	100

[a]These percentages reflect those families receiving greater than 80% of the scheduled home visits.

[b]The years included in this table represent all the years for which there are complete sets of data.

3) at least 20% of the parents attending a PAC activity.

Data concerning decisions made by parents at PAC meetings are presented in Table 2. Examples of these decisions address topics such as: determining the criteria for the selection of paraprofessionals; writing proposals; and gathering information for presentation in Washington, D.C., to support the future funding of the program. In one of our communities, a total of 680 decisions was made at 173 different meetings during the 1977-78 school year.

In Table 3 are presented data concerning parent attendance at various PAC meetings which focus upon topics such as hiring of personnel, proposal writing, and reviewing actions taken by parents to support the future funding of the program. Attendance at these meetings has remained consistently high over a five year period.

In addition to these parent meetings, parents have attended PAC activity functions such as Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED) classes and banquets honoring active parents in the program. The parental roles demonstrated at these GED classes and banquets are those of an adult learner and audience, respectively. As one will observe in Table 3, attendance at these and other activities has steadily increased over a five year period. The median percentage of families attending activity functions at least one time across all communities has increased from 15% in 1973-74 to 50% in 1977-78.

The last type of descriptive data pertains to the involvement of parents as volunteers in the classroom. The program emphasizes this role of volunteering which includes classroom activities for parents such as instructional, materials development, clerical, housekeeping, and evaluation. Sign-in sheets are provided for the parents in each classroom and evidence of success in this area is shown by having at least 35% of the parents volunteering in the classroom.

Table 2

Number of Decisions Made

at Policy Advisory Committee Meetings[a]

1976 - 1978

Year	Lowest Community	Median Community	Highes Community
1975-76			
Decisions	7	25	235
Meetings[b]	9	8	138
1976-77			
Decisions	46	107	376
Meetings[b]	20	13	66
1977-78			
Decisions	50	263	680
Meetings[b]	16	60	173

[a]The years included in this table represent all the years for which there are complete sets of data.

[b]The numbers indicate the number of meetings at which these decisions were made.

Table 3

Parental Involvement Data:

Percentages of Parents Who Attend Policy Advisory

at Committee Meetings and Activities[a]

1974 - 1978

Year	Lowest Community	Median Community	Highest Community
	Meetings		
1973 - 1974	9	27	59
1974 - 1975	14	28	57
1975 - 1976	18	34	55
1976 - 1977	13	33	53
1977 - 1978	27	41	83
	Activities		
1973 - 1974	7	15	27
1974 - 1975	4	22	31
1975 - 1976	14	26	44
1976 - 1977	11	27	62
1977 - 1978	20	50	84

[a]The years included in this table represent all the years for which there are complete sets of data.

These parental volunteering data are presented in Table 4. The percentage of parents who have volunteered in the classroom at least once has increased from 1973-74 to 1977-78. These high percentages indicate the active involvement on the part of parents when participating in classroom activities such as teaching, keeping records, evaluating, and developing materials.

These descriptive data which cover diverse areas of parental involvement are impressive in that they show the successful impact of the program as evidenced by the high level of parent involvement in the home, classroom, and at PAC meetings and activities at which parents make decisions regarding their children, the Follow Through program, the school system, and the community.

Inferential Data

The final type of parent involvement data collected in the Parent Education Follow Through program is of an inferential nature and highlights the role of parents as teachers of their own children. These data include assessment of the relationship between program related teaching behaviors and child achievement and the effect the program has had upon members of the family other than the targeted child.

The direct relationship between parental teaching behaviors and child achievement was examined in a study by Olmsted (1975). Parents were videotaped while teaching their children a standard task. Using one set of parents who had been in the Parent Education Follow Through program for at least one year and another set of comparable parents who had never been in the program (non-Parent Education Follow Through), these videotapes were scored for the number of Desirable Teaching Behaviors (DTBs) used. These desirable teaching behaviors are stressed during the weekly home visits in conjunction

Table 4

Parental Involvement Data:

Percentages of Parents Who Volunteered in the Classroom[a]

1974 - 1978

Year	Lowest Community	Median Community	Highest Community
1973 - 1974	19	42	58
1974 - 1975	29	45	70
1975 - 1976	27	42	96
1976 - 1977	28	55	84
1977 - 1978	36	76	90

[a]The years included in this table represent all the years for which there are complete sets of data

with home learning activities. The results indicated that Parent Education Follow Through parents used an average of 24.0 DTBs while the non-Parent Education Follow Through parents used only an average of 14.5 DTBs. This difference was statistically significant ($F = 6.35$, 1 & 63 df, $p < .05$), leading one to conclude that for this sample, participation in the Parent Education Follow Through program may have increased the parents' use of the DTBs. Further evidence suggested a relationship between the number of DTBs used by the parent and the performance of the child on the Total Reading and Total Mathematics subtests of the Stanford Achievement Test. The results indicated that the number of DTBs used by the parent correlated both with Reading ($r = .50$, $p < .001$) and with Math ($r = .35$, $p < .05$).

The second area of inferential data relates to vertical diffusion. Vertical diffusion refers to the phenomenon by which members of the family other than the target child are affected by the program. If the Parent Education Follow Through program modifies parental teaching style, then the parents may apply these new skills with younger children. As a result, the younger siblings from Parent Education Follow Through homes may come to school better prepared than younger siblings coming from homes not previously included in the Parent Education Follow Through program. This hypothesis has been researched in two studies, and, in both, it was found that children coming from Parent Education Follow Through homes scored higher on the Pre-school Inventory than did comparable children coming from non-Parent Education Follow Through homes. Furthermore, the results seemed to suggest that it takes about two years of parent participation before an impact occurs (Moreno, 1974; Ware, Organ, Olmsted, & Moreno, 1974).

Conclusion

The data presented here demonstrate the effectiveness of a community impact model which emphasizes diverse parental involvement. By promoting

six parental roles, the program has had extensive impact, as evidenced by case study, descriptive, and inferential data reported in this paper.

The growth of parents as paraprofessionals was illustrated by case study material and data relating to home visitation, while the enhancement of parents as decision makers, adult learners, and audience was shown in the attendance data, meeting minutes, and case study reports. The improvement of parents as teachers of their own children was demonstrated by two kinds of inferential data. The high degree of parental volunteering in the classroom provides evidence of positive changes in parents as classroom volunteers, the sixth and final role of parents stressed in the program.

The above data thus show the effectiveness of the social systems approach of the Parent Education Follow Through Program. The success of its broad-based strategy for research and development highlights the need for programs stressing parent education, particularly interventions fostering multiple parental roles.

References

Boruch, R. F., & Rindskopf, D. On randomized experiments, approximations to experiments, and data analysis. In L. Rutman (Ed.), Evaluation research methods: A basic guide. Beverly Hills, California: Sage, 1977.

Cook, T. D., & Reichardt, C. S. Guidelines: Statistical analysis of non-equivalent control group designs: A guide to some current literature. Evaluation, 1976, 3 (1-2).

Glass, G. V. Primary, secondary and meta-analysis of research. Educational Researcher, 1976, 5 (10).

Gordon, I. J., Olmsted, P. P., Rubin, R. I., and True, J. H. How has Follow Through promoted parent involvement? National Association for the Education of Young Children, Young Children, 1979, in press.

Moreno, P. R. Vertical diffusion effects within Black and Mexican-American families participating in the Florida parent education model. Doctoral dissertation, University of Florida, 1974.

Olmsted, P. Parental teaching strategies, program participation, and child achievement. In Ware, W. B., Greenwood, G. E., Gordon, I. J., Breivogel, W. F., Olmsted, P. P., & Hanes, M. L. Assistance to Local Follow Through Programs, Annual Report. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education, Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education, Follow Through Branch, December, 1975.

Porter, A. C., & Chibucos, T. R. Common problems of design and analysis in evaluative research. Sociological Methods and Research, 1975, 3.

Rindskopf, D. Secondary analyses: Using multiple analysis approaches with Head Start and Title I data. In R. Boruch (Ed.), Secondary analysis: New directions for program evaluation. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1978.

Ware, W. B., Organ, D., Olmsted, P. P., & Moreno, P. Vertical diffusion in a family-centered intervention program. Childhood Education, 1974, 51, 111-115.